

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

BILL: SB 728

INTRODUCER: Senator Garcia

SUBJECT: Liveries

DATE: March 13, 2023

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Carroll	Rogers	EN	Pre-meeting
2.			CM	
3.			RC	

I. Summary:

SB 728 specifies that a livery’s pre-rental or pre-ride instruction must be hands-on. The instruction must include education on safety, regulatory, informational, or navigation markers in the geographic vicinity, and on the prohibition against boating under the influence.

The bill exempts a renter or lessee and livery from the pre-rental or pre-ride instruction requirement if the renter or lessee retains a professional captain with an active U.S. Coast Guard license, as required by the agreement between the livery and the renter or lessee.

The bill allows a livery to limit insurance covering the renter if the renter or lessee has a boating certification authorized by statute or if the renter or lessee hires a professional captain.

The bill allows the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to enter into agreements with qualified contractors to inspect liveries for compliance with statutory requirements.

II. Present Situation:

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is responsible for regulating, managing, protecting, and conserving the state’s fish and wildlife resources.¹ FWC is governed by a board of seven members who are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Florida Senate.² Under Article IV, Section 9 of the Florida Constitution, FWC has the authority to exercise the regulatory and executive powers of the state with respect to wild animal life, fresh water aquatic life, and marine life.

¹ FLA. CONST. art. IV, s. 9.

² *Id.*; see also s. 379.102(1), F.S.

Chapter 327, F.S., concerning vessel safety is enforced by FWC's Division of Law Enforcement and its officers, county sheriffs and deputies, municipal police officers, and any other law enforcement officer.³ The Division of Law Enforcement manages the state's waterways to ensure boating safety for Florida residents and visitors.⁴ This includes enforcing boating rules and regulations, coordinating boating safety campaigns and education, managing public waters and access to the waters, conducting boating accident investigations, identifying and removing derelict vessels, and investigating vessel theft and title fraud.⁵

Boating Safety Education

A person operating a vessel powered by a motor of 10 horsepower or greater must possess photographic identification and a Florida boating safety identification card; a state-issued identification card or driver license indicating possession of the boating safety identification card; or photographic identification and a temporary certificate issued or approved by FWC, an International Certificate of Competency, a boating safety card or certificate from another state or U.S. territory, or a Canadian Pleasure Craft Operator Card.⁶ A person is exempt from this requirement if he or she:

- Was born before January 1, 1988;⁷
- Is or has been licensed by the U.S. Coast Guard;
- Operates a vessel only on a private lake or pond;
- Is accompanied by an adult who meets boating safety requirements and who is attendant to the operation of the vessel and responsible for safe operation of the vessel;
- Is a nonresident who possesses photographic identification and proof of completion of a boating safety education course or examination that meets or exceeds the minimum requirements established by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators;
- Is operating a vessel within 90 days after purchase and possesses the bill of sale; or
- Is exempted by FWC rule.⁸

A Florida boating safety identification card is issued after successful completion of a boating safety education course approved by FWC.⁹ The card is valid for a person's life.¹⁰ A temporary certificate requires passing an FWC-approved examination and is valid for 90 days after the date of issuance.¹¹ An FWC-approved boating safety education course or temporary certificate examination must contain information regarding:

³ Section 327.70(1), F.S.; *see* s. 943.10(1), F.S., which defines "law enforcement officer" as any person who is elected, appointed, or employed full time by any municipality or the state or any political subdivision thereof; who is vested with authority to bear arms and make arrests; and whose primary responsibility is the prevention and detection of crime or the enforcement of the penal, criminal, traffic, or highway laws of the state. The definition also includes all certified supervisory and command personnel whose duties include, in whole or in part, the supervision, training, guidance, and management responsibilities of full-time law enforcement officers, part-time law enforcement officers, or auxiliary law enforcement officers but does not include support personnel employed by the employing agency.

⁴ Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), *Boating*, <https://myfwc.com/boating/> (last visited March 6, 2023).

⁵ FWC, *Law Enforcement*, <https://myfwc.com/about/inside-fwc/le/> (last visited March 6, 2023). *See* s. 327.70(1) and (4), F.S.

⁶ Section 327.395(1), (2), F.S.

⁷ Section 327.395(1), F.S.

⁸ Section 327.395(6), F.S.

⁹ Section 327.395(3), F.S.

¹⁰ Section 327.395(5), F.S.

¹¹ Section 327.395(3), (5), F.S.

- Diving vessels, awareness of divers in the water, divers-down warning devices, and navigation around divers;
- The danger associated with:
 - A passenger riding on a vessel area not designed and designated for seating,
 - A passenger falling overboard,
 - Operating a vessel near a person in the water,
 - Starting a vessel with the engine in gear, and
 - Leaving the vessel running when a passenger is boarding or disembarking; and
- The proper use and lifesaving benefits of an engine cutoff switch for motorboats and personal watercraft.¹²

Regulation of Liveries

A livery is defined as a person who advertises and offers a livery vessel¹³ for use by another in exchange for any type of consideration, when the livery does not also provide the lessee or renter with a captain, crew, or any type of staff or personnel to operate, oversee, maintain, or manage the vessel.¹⁴ The statute specifies two exemptions from the definition:

- Vessel owners who do not advertise their vessel for use by another for consideration and who loan or offer the vessel to a person they know; and
- A public or private school or postsecondary institution located in the state.¹⁵

A livery may not offer a vessel for lease or rent without obtaining an annual, no-cost livery permit from FWC.¹⁶ To qualify for the issuance or renewal of the permit, a livery must:

- Provide FWC with a list of all vessels available for lease or rent;
- Have valid insurance;
- Have enough U.S. Coast Guard-approved lawful personal flotation devices on site to accommodate the capacity of all available vessels;
- Have enough safety equipment required by statute and the Code of Federal Regulations on site to equip all available vessels; and
- Display boating safety information in a place visible to the renting public.

If the information required to qualify for the permit changes before the annual renewal of the permit, a livery must provide the updated information to FWC within 10 days of the change.¹⁷

Regarding boating safety, the law prohibits a livery from knowingly leasing or renting a vessel to any person:

- When the number of persons intending to use the vessel exceeds the maximum safety load for the vessel;
- When the horsepower of the motor exceeds the capacity of the vessel;

¹² Section 327.395(4), F.S.

¹³ A livery vessel is defined as a vessel that is leased, rented, or chartered to another for consideration. Section 327.02(24), F.S.

¹⁴ Section 327.54(1), F.S.

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ Section 327.54(2), F.S.

¹⁷ *Id.*

- When the vessel does not contain required safety equipment;
- When the vessel is not seaworthy, is derelict, or is at risk of becoming derelict;
- Unless the livery provides pre-rental or pre-ride instruction that reviews, at a minimum:
 - The operational characteristics of the livery vessel,
 - Safe vessel operation and right-of-way,
 - The responsibility of the vessel operator for the safe and proper operation of the vessel,
 - Local characteristics of the waterway, and
 - Emergency procedures;
- Unless the livery displays boating safety information in a place visible to the renting public; and
- Unless the livery has a written agreement with the renter or lessee.¹⁸

A livery also may not knowingly lease or rent a vessel to a person who is required to have a boating safety identification card or other boating safety certificate unless the person presents the card or certificate and photographic identification to the livery.¹⁹ A person must be 18 years or more to rent a livery vessel other than a human-powered vessel.²⁰ Liveries must notify law enforcement if a vessel is unnecessarily overdue by more than four hours or if an accident occurs.²¹

Liveries must also obtain and carry in full force and effect a policy from a licensed insurance carrier in the state, which insures the livery and the renter against any accident, loss, injury, property damage, or other casualty caused by or resulting from the operation of the livery vessel. The policy must cover at least \$500,000 per person and \$1 million per event. Proof of insurance must be available for inspection where vessels are rented or leased. The insurance requirement only applies to human-powered vessels.²²

A livery is required to make its facilities and records available for inspection upon request of law enforcement within 24 hours of receiving notice.²³

The Boating Safety Act of 2022

The Legislature passed the Boating Safety Act of 2022 in part to increase protections for individuals who rent or lease livery vessels.²⁴ The Act provided the current statutory definition of a livery as a person who advertises and offers a livery vessel for use by another in exchange for any type of consideration, when the livery does not also provide a captain, crew, or any type of staff or personnel to operate, oversee, maintain, or manage the vessel. It also required liveries to obtain a no-cost, annual livery permit, as well as an insurance policy that insures both the livery and the renter. The Act added additional components to FWC-approved boating safety education courses and temporary certificate examinations.²⁵

¹⁸ Section 327.54(3), F.S.

¹⁹ Section 327.54(4), F.S.; *See generally* s. 327.395, F.S.

²⁰ Section 327.54(6), F.S.

²¹ Section 327.54(5) and (9), F.S.

²² Section 327.54(7), F.S.

²³ Section 327.54(10), F.S.

²⁴ Chapter 2022-197, Laws of Fla.

²⁵ *Id.*

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1 amends s. 327.54, F.S., to specify that a livery's pre-rental or pre-ride instruction must be hands-on. The bill requires that the instruction include education on any safety, regulatory, informational, or navigation markers in the geographic vicinity, as well as notice of the prohibition against boating under the influence.

The bill provides that if a renter or lessee retains a professional captain who holds an active U.S. Coast Guard license to command the livery vessel as required by the agreement between the livery and the renter or lessee, and the livery confirms that the captain has been retained, the renter or lessee and the livery will be exempt from the pre-rental or pre-ride instruction requirement.

The bill allows a livery to limit insurance covering the renter if the renter or lessee:

- Has a Florida boating safety identification card issued by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), a temporary certificate, or another authorized form of boating certification; or
- Hires a professional captain who holds an active U.S. Coast Guard license.

To enhance enforcement efforts, the bill allows FWC to enter into agreements with qualified contractors to perform inspections of liveries to ensure compliance with statutory requirements. The inspections may be performed by an authorized agent working under the supervision of a qualified contractor. The bill requires the qualified contractor to provide a copy of a written, signed inspection report to the livery upon completion of the inspection and to FWC within 30 days of the inspection. FWC may develop the contents of the inspection report.

The bill requires that a livery must make the statement form attesting to pre-rental or pre-ride instruction and the written agreement between the livery and the renter or lessee available for inspection by an authorized agent of FWC. The bill further requires that a livery make its facilities and records available for inspection by an authorized agent of FWC no later than 24 hours after receiving notice from the authorized agent.

The bill makes technical changes.

Section 2 provides an effective date of July 1, 2023.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends section 327.54 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.